

Kentucky Teacher

May 2008

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Celebrating National Teacher Appreciation Week

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News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Front cover: Billy Noble, physical education teacher at *Tates Creek Elementary* (Fayette County), talks with Krista Johnson, left, and Jamisha Evans about cardiovascular fitness. On Page 16, Kentucky PTA members recognize Noble and teachers across the state during National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-10). Photo by Amy Wallot

Talk to the Experts ...

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Low-income students can take AP, IB exams without paying fees

For the past six years, Kentucky high school students who qualify for the federal free and reduced-price meals program have been able to take Advanced Placement (AP) exams and International Baccalaureate (IB) tests at no cost to them. Fee waivers are available again to low-income students for exams/tests administered this spring because the U.S. Department of Education has awarded the Kentucky Department of Education an AP/IB Fee Waiver Grant. This year, Kentucky's grant totals \$146,274.

The number of exams paid for by the AP/IB Fee Waiver Grant has more than doubled in the six years the department has received the grant. In 2002, the grant paid fees for 982 AP exams. That number increased in 2007 to 2,377 exams.

In 2007, there were 1,510 Kentucky students who qualified for the free and reduced-price meals program and who took an AP exam. This is an 11 percent increase from 2006.

"Kentucky public schools are making progress in including minority and low-income

students in AP courses," said Larry Murphy, credit-based transition consultant for the Department of Education. "High schools should see this AP/IB Fee Waiver Grant as a no-cost way to increase participation and success in these rigorous courses by removing barriers of access and opportunity for low-income and diverse students."

The number of IB tests paid for by the test-fee program rose from none in 2002 to 136 in 2007. Only four public schools and one non-public school offer the IB program in Kentucky and have been designated as IB World schools.

"This grant is vital in helping AP and IB students for whom money would be a barrier to taking the assessments. Nearly half of all Kentucky students P-12 qualify for the free and reduced-price meals program," Murphy said. "This grant means there is no upfront cost to the students or to their schools – they don't have to send money and wait to be reimbursed. All fees for qualifying low-income students are billed to and paid by the Ken-

tucky Department of Education."

The process for using the AP/IB Waiver continues to be a simple process, Murphy said. Each eligible student marks the "Option 1, Fee Reduction" section on his or her AP exam.

When the AP coordinator is completing the College Board's online invoice for the school, the coordinator indicates the number of students who took the exam and who qualify for the free and reduced-price meals program. The online invoice computes the charges and deducts the fee waivers from the amount the school must pay.

Once the number of AP exams taken by qualifying students is verified, the department pays the fees directly to the College Board. Last year, the department used \$125,000 from its AP/IB Fee Waiver Grant to pay for AP and IB exams taken by low-income students.

MORE INFO ...

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Photos by Amy Wallot

All means all – even on the playground

Churchill Park School (Jefferson County) opened its new state-of-the-art sensory playground this spring.

Students can maneuver more easily in wheelchairs along the rubberized groundcover. Students with sight and hearing impairments can play on sensory-stimulating equipment such as the sliding board with rumble bars. The main play structure is wheelchair-accessible, and swings accommodate students with a variety of ability levels.

Churchill Park School serves 96 students, ages 5–21, with a variety of special needs. It also serves 138 early childhood students in the district, many with special needs.

Left, Ryan McCarrick is all smiles after going down the sliding board with rumble bars. Gym teacher Jan Krekel, above, helps student Travis Taylor move from his wheelchair into a specially designed swing.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Jon E. Draud, Commissioner of Education

Budget will place heavy burden on public schools

Tighten your belts, it's going to be a rough couple of years in Kentucky public education! That's the best advice I can give after carefully analyzing education funding in the state budget for the next two fiscal years.

The 2009-10 budget places a heavy burden on public school administrators, teachers, staff, parents, students and communities across the state. Both the Kentucky House and Senate passed the budget, which became law without Gov. Steve Beshear's signature.



Draud

This two-year budget does not provide adequate state funding for public education and threatens to hinder progress being made by many districts.

Still, we must put forth our best efforts and continue to show professional attitudes as we work to ensure proficiency for all students.

As I write this column, the Council for Better Education, whose membership is made up of most of the state's superintendents, is predicting that many districts will be forced to cut teaching staff. This will deprive students of many instructional opportunities.

Other education advocacy groups fear that ground gained in moving Kentucky students

to proficiency and beyond and preparing students for successful careers will be lost without increased financial support.

Kentucky lags behind

Even if P-12 education had been spared any funding cuts for the 2009-10 biennium, Kentucky still would lag behind other states in the area of public school financing. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, based on 2003-04 data, Kentucky ranked dead last in per-capita expenditures of state and local governments for public schools.

Approximately \$1,100 was spent for each person in Kentucky on P-12 education in 2003-04. Nationwide, the 2003-04 average was slightly more than \$1,500 per person.

While spending great amounts of public money doesn't guarantee high student achievement, there is a direct correlation between careful use of state funding and high student performance.

Invest in the future

My challenge to Kentucky policymakers and Kentuckians everywhere is to stop thinking of education and economic health as simply having a tenuous connection. They are inseparable – the viability of one has a direct effect on the strength of the other.

In an average school year, Kentucky spends about \$43 a day to educate a student.

That breaks down to about \$7 an hour each school day. On average, Kentuckians working in jobs that do not require high-school diplomas make about \$7.37 an hour.

Do we place so little importance on our children's education that we are only willing to pay an amount that is equivalent to salaries for the most menial occupations?

This is not so much about financial support as about a philosophy that children are important and that their education should be our primary concern. The 2009-10 budget does not reveal legislative concern for children, families and communities that I know exists.

Nor does it reveal legislative support I know exists for the goal of education reform: to have all students proficient and prepared

for success. However, without adequate revenue, funding will not be available to provide the learning opportunities that will help students reach proficiency and motivate them to be successful. (See accompanying chart.)

The legislature developed the best budget it could with the money available. However, Kentucky needs additional revenue to fund public education programs that have proven successful in helping students reach high levels of achievement. We must have additional revenue to help schools that are struggling to achieve their goals by 2014, the deadline mandated by state and federal laws.

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Draud at jon.draud@education.ky.gov.)

Budget impacts to teaching and learning

- Individual Learning Plan (ILP)** – used by at least 248,000 middle and high school students to prepare for college and careers; mandated by state regulation for the graduating class of 2012 and beyond
 Needed: \$750,000 each year
 Appropriated: \$0
- Online Assessments** – distribution of dedicated servers to each school district and development of formative assessments prior to using online assessments to measure student growth through the year
 Needed: \$8 million
 Appropriated: \$0
- Student Information System** – used by schools and districts to provide student enrollment, attendance, grades and other administrative management data for state- and federal-mandated reporting
 Needed for operation in 2009-10: \$7 million
 Appropriated: \$4 million in bond funding for completion and implementation; no operating funds
- End-of-Course Exams** – intended to ensure that high school students complete rigorous mathematics courses (Geometry, Algebra I and Algebra II) and to provide consistency in course content across the state
 Needed: \$3.16 million in 2008-09 and \$1.8 million in 2009-10 for operations or \$860,000 in 2008-09 and \$1.8 million in 2009-10 to extend pilot
 Appropriated: \$0
- Uniform Norm-Referenced Test (NRT)** – required by law, the NRT will enable a national comparison in reading and mathematics for exiting primary students
 Needed: \$750,000 each year of biennium
 Appropriated: \$0
- WorkKeys and ACT Retakes** – required by state law to provide retakes of these assessments without charge to students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals program
 Needed: \$650,000
 Appropriated: \$0
- KIDS Now/Early Childhood** – provides health, family support and early childhood services through different state agencies, including the Department of Education
 Needed for funding level with 2007-08: \$27,968,908
 Appropriated: \$23,795,800 each year of biennium
- Professional Development** – provides professional development opportunities to teachers
 Needed for funding level with 2007-08: \$15,034,700
 Appropriated: \$6,242,700 each year of biennium
- Alternate Assessments** – appropriately assesses students with severe and profound disabilities for state assessment and accountability program and to comply with federal laws and programs for federal funding
 Needed: \$1 million
 Appropriated: \$249,400
- Knowledge Management Portal (KMP)/KIDS** – provides electronic sharing of instructional resources, longitudinal student tracking, data warehousing and more
 Needed: \$6.25 million over biennium for bonding
 Appropriated: \$0
- Teacher Raises** – to catch up salaries with the average of surrounding states and keep pace with inflation.
 Appropriated: 1 percent increase each year of biennium
- Early Reading Incentive Grants/Read to Achieve** – provides implementation of research-based reading diagnostic and intervention programs
 Needed for funding level with 2007-08: \$23,558,100
 Appropriated: \$22,558,100 each year of the biennium
- Extended School Services** – offers extra instructional time for students having short- or long-term academic difficulties
 Needed for funding to be level with 2007-08: \$31,859,500
 Appropriated: \$13,338,700 each year of biennium
- Safe Schools** – provides funding for substance abuse and violence reduction programming
 Needed for funding level with 2007-08: \$10,378,300
 Appropriated: \$4,709,300 each year of biennium
- Teacher Professional Growth Fund** – provides funds to prepare teachers (grades 4-12) to work with reading and mathematics teachers as coaches and mentors
 Needed for funding level with 2007-08: \$3,925,300
 Appropriated: \$994,700 each year of biennium



Photo by Amy Walliot

Talking education progress

Kentucky Commissioner of Education Jon E. Draud and U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings talk during an education policy roundtable held in March at Fourth Street Elementary School (Newport Independent). Spellings, who made several stops in Kentucky to meet with public school educators, students, college presidents, and business and community leaders, had praise for Kentucky's progress under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. (See story on Page 13.)

Grant to turbocharge schools' AP offerings

By Matthew Tungate

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Twelve Kentucky high schools will receive additional teacher training and incentives through Advanced Placement courses in mathematics, science and English in the first year of a six-year, \$13.2 million grant.

Anderson County, Barren County, Corbin Independent, Henderson County, Lone Oak and Reidland (McCracken County), Marion County, North Laurel and South Laurel (Laurel County), Scott County, Shelby County and Warren East (Warren County) high schools will share \$800,000 in the first year of the grant. The grant announcement came during the April meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education.

The schools were chosen from 26 that submitted proposals to the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI). The grants will "support strategies such as high expectations for student performance, more time-on-task for students, recruitment and support of underserved populations of students, extensive teacher training, lead teacher/mentor support, teacher stipends, and other student and teacher incentives for success," according to materials provided for the board.

AdvanceKentucky is the non-profit corporation administering the \$13.2 million, six-year NMSI grant. The ExxonMobil Foundation, the Gates Foundation and the Dell Foundation fund the grant.

As part of the grants, AP teachers receive a \$500 stipend, \$100 for each student's qualifying score and bonuses for achieving pre-set qualifying-score targets. Schools can receive up to \$5,000 for equipment and \$25 per student in AP classes. Master AP teachers will help guide vertical core-content teams, and AP and pre-AP teachers will participate in five-day summer institutes and other training during the school year.

Students will receive money to help cover the costs of AP exam fees and \$100 per qualifying score on AP exams.

Eligible classes include calculus,

computer science, statistics, biology, chemistry, environmental science, physics, English language and English literature. The 12 schools are expected to double their number of AP classes over the next five years.

Joanne Lang, executive director of AdvanceKentucky; Gregg Fleisher, national AP director for the National Math and Science Initiative; and Truman Bell, senior program officer for the Exxon Foundation, announced the winning schools.

Bell said ExxonMobil is supporting the program because it wants to help create a work force of chemists, engineers and geologists; develop a science-savvy citizenry, and maintain the United States' technological superiority in the world.

"We don't want to drill any dry holes, and we know AP is a gusher," he said.

AdvanceKentucky expects the schools' qualifying scores in the selected courses to grow by 120 percent from 2007 to 2009 and 230 percent in five years. The organization also expects to quadruple the enrollment in AP courses in the 12 schools from 1,100 in 2007 to 4,300 by 2013.

"We are looking for exponential growth," Lang said.

On the opposite end of the educational spectrum, the board discussed interventions for low-performing schools and reaffirmed its commitment to stronger actions for schools with chronically low performance in the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

Commissioner Jon E. Draud reported on a Blue Ribbon panel he has formed to identify intervention strategies working in high-performing schools with socio-economic and other barriers to learning. The panel will explore ways to emulate those strategies in low-performing schools.

"I don't think we need a lot of new programs; we need more qual-

ity implementation of what we are doing," he said.

Draud got the board's agreement that he needed to do something to jump-start the progress of Level 3 schools, those that are struggling the most to reach proficiency by 2014. "I don't know that we can allow schools that are at Level 3 to stay there without some kind of dramatic action occurring," he said.

Draud said he wants the board to ultimately be able to present a legislative package based on the panel's recommendations "that will really tackle these issues." Draud cited leadership specifically as an issue that needs to be addressed.

He also discussed a task force he proposes to convene to look into Kentucky's assessment and accountability system. Draud, a former state legislator, said Senate Bill 1 would have overhauled Kentucky's assessment system had it not failed to get support during the 2008 session of the General Assembly.

"We need to somehow have an assessment instrument that is going to be well-accepted by most of the people that are in policy-making roles, as well as the educators," he said.

Draud said he hopes that the task force, which will consist of policy-makers and education stakeholders, including P-16 educators, will be able to develop consensus.

"There are issues that need to be looked at in our assessment system, but they need to be looked at in the atmosphere of people with goodwill trying to do what's best for kids in the state instead of some of the acrimony that we've had over that issue," he said.

He expected to appoint the task force after the General Assembly adjourned in mid-April. Draud said he has received more than 200 requests from people who want to be on the task force.

Chairman Joe Brothers said he would like to see the board make

decisions on assessment "based on science, rather than politics. I do not think whether we have CATS is a political question. It may, unfortunately, be one, but we really ought to be doing what we're doing on the basis of science and statistics as to what best works for kids."

The board also:

- heard a discussion about high-quality teaching and learning, led by Chandra Emerson, the 2008 Kentucky Teacher of the Year
- heard a report on end-of-course testing for Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry: The Department of Education is involved in two pilot programs that will administer exams in the courses during April. Algebra II is being tested as part of a multi-state consortium, and Algebra I and Geometry tests were developed with the Center for Mathematics and Science at the University of Louisville.
- appointed four new members to the State Textbook Commission: Donna Lovell, director of districtwide services in Berea Independent Schools; Cheryl Smith, a parent from Hardin County; Deneia Thomas, associate professor in the College of Education at Eastern Kentucky University; and Barbara Waltrip, a teacher

at Audubon Elementary School (Daviess County)

- heard reports from Christian County and Jefferson County school districts on the status of school support plans
- approved district facilities plans from Boone County, Laurel County and Oldham County school districts, and district facilities plan amendments from Anderson County and Shelby County school districts. The board also waived financial penalties against the Whitley County school district for having too few instructional days because construction delayed opening a new school.
- approved a change to Kentucky High School Athletic Association by-laws that would prohibit students from participating in varsity sports in 9th grade if they played varsity sports for a different school in 7th or 8th grade
- announced that former board chairman Keith Travis has resigned his seat. Travis' term was set to expire in April 2010.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Kentucky+Board+of+Education



Photo by Amy Wallot

Job well done

Primary student Jessi Hopper smiles when he gets the right answer and a round of applause for a job well done from Laura Flatt, a special education teacher at Russell Springs Elementary (Russell County). Tina Thomas, back right, also is intent on her computer assignment in Flatt's class for students with moderate and severe disabilities.

This is the last profile in a series about the five Kentucky public schools that received the 2007 Blue Ribbon Schools designation. Previous issues this school year featured Highlands High School (Fort Thomas Independent), Farmington Elementary (Graves County), Greathouse/Shryock Traditional Elementary (Jefferson County) and Sorgho Elementary (Daviess County).

Whitesville goes BLUE

Rural Daviess County school honored for NCLB success

By Susan Riddell

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Whitesville Elementary School (Daviess County) is your typical high-performing school. Students excel, parents are involved in learning, and faculty members work hard and enjoy making an impact on the lives of children.

There's nothing fancy about the school building, except for the giant blue ribbon that hung for the better part of the school year in the gymnasium.

That ribbon, which took up nearly an entire gym wall, signified Whitesville's designation as a 2007 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Blue Ribbon School.

The Blue Ribbon award recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and make significant progress in closing achievement gaps. The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the requirements of the federal NCLB Act.

Whitesville Elementary, with slightly more than 400 P-5 students, is, in fact, a rural school by all accounts. Located in southeastern Daviess County, it is removed from the majority of schools in the district, most of which lie within the Owensboro city limits.

"It is truly a country school," Superintendent Tom Shelton said.

"It has the largest – if not, the second-largest – geographic zone in our county. Whitesville pulls a lot of kids in sparsely populated areas and also has one of our highest free- and reduced-lunch counts.

"The warmth in the building among the staff members makes for a great environment," Shelton added. "It's in its own community, and it's the center of the community. They say it takes a village to grow a child. Whitesville does that literally."

That warmth, according to 4th-grade teacher Tricia Murphy, starts with Principal Cindy Appleby.

"Her door is always open," Murphy said of Appleby, "and her dedication toward success of our school is incredible."

"She has worked countless hours to create a more clear vision for the direction of Whitesville," Murphy added. "She strives to assure that all students in her building are receiving what they need academically and socially, and that her teachers have exactly what they need to provide that."

The community involvement Superintendent Shelton spoke of hinges on the parents of Whitesville students. Each year, they are asked to sign a learning compact that is part of the school's Title I program.

"It's the parents' way of committing to their child's education, helping with homework, attending school activities," Appleby said.



Photo by Amy Wallot

A big blue ribbon commemorating Whitesville Elementary School's designation as a 2007 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School decorates one wall of the school gym as 5th graders prepare to celebrate the honor at a school assembly.

"When we have conferences, we can refer back to the learning compact. We find it's just another communication tool that lets the parents know what we're willing to do. We get 100 percent back. If we're missing four or five in a classroom, we'll continue to contact those parents until the compacts are turned in. We think it's important."

Crunching the numbers

The Whitesville staff constantly analyzes test scores and other pertinent academic data. Appleby and her staff aligned the curriculum when she took over at Whitesville five years ago.

"We did vertical and horizontal alignment and continue that every year. It's essential," she said. "Teachers will work together in their respective grades. Then we'll pull K-5 together to make sure it's aligned. We are constantly monitoring data and looking at progress reports. We monitor children that we're concerned about. We feel like we know where everybody is."

"Three years ago, we looked at our map. The history had been scores go up, scores go down," Appleby added. "We came up with a plan to make sure that doesn't continue. I don't want to speak too soon, but it seems we've broken that pattern for right now."

Breaking the pattern proved to be a schoolwide effort, according to

Murphy, the 4th-grade teacher.

"We have worked a great deal on aligning our curriculum with Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment within each grade level to notice gaps we may be overlooking," Murphy said. "As a whole school, we determine what our students need throughout their elementary years to become more prepared for each level of their education."

"This past year, we noticed a specific area of weakness in CATS (Commonwealth Accountability Testing System) results and determined an exact plan for each grade level to implement so that the students would be exposed to vocabulary and experiments on every grade level that would lead to greater success in this area. We worked last year to correlate writing vocabulary across each grade level, beginning with kindergarten, simply to create a strong baseline for the students that would benefit them when they reach 4th grade and beyond."

Appleby agrees. "We couldn't break that pattern just working with 5th grade," she said. "Everybody in the building is using the same math (Everyday Math). Five years ago, different grade levels used different math. The consistency of the language is so important. We've also implemented Success Maker. We use that daily

because of the technology that has been made available to us. We saw significant gains after the first year of Success Maker."

A growing school

Whitesville moved into a new building in 1993. "When this school was built, it had the most up-to-date technology there was," Appleby said. "From 1993 until two, three years ago, our technology had not progressed to what was at other schools."

To keep up with the times, Whitesville has added two more computer labs as well as several new classrooms. Those classrooms are complete with SmartBoards, projectors and document cameras.

"We have three active computer labs, and there's never a moment someone is not in there," Appleby said. "Technology is so important. That's what kids know, and we have to stay on top of that. I get excited just watching and listening to lessons that are used. One teacher recently had a lesson using Movie Maker. The kids really get into it. They don't even realize the content they're absorbing."

MORE INFO ...

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Regional teaching partners help schools move toward proficiency

By Susan Riddell

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Gloria Davis and Ann Booth aren't teachers, but they are enhancing education in many Kentucky classrooms.

Davis and Booth have spent the last several years working as Regional Teaching Partners (RTPs) through the Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative (ARSI). ARSI received a leadership supplemental award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to develop Master Teachers, which ARSI called RTPs, according to Kim Zeidler, director of the K-12 Math and Science Outreach Unit of the Partnership Institute for Math and Science Education Reform (PIMSER) at the University of Kentucky.

"As RTPs, they received content, pedagogy and leadership-training expertise that provided them with the skills to work effectively as partners with schools to bring about changes in student achievement in the areas of math and science," Zeidler said.

Davis and McKinney Elementary

Davis' charge as an RTP for McKinney Elementary School (Lincoln County) was to help the school raise test scores. In 2000, McKinney's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) mathematics index was 40, its science index was 53 and its total academic index was 47. The school was in assistance, and the Kentucky Department of Education sent a Scholastic Audit team to evaluate why the novice rates at McKinney were so high.

"McKinney was a diamond in the rough," said Principal Donnie Leigh, who is in his sixth year at the Title I school of 150-plus K-5 students. "It's a poor community in a poor county. The community is highly supportive of our school, the children and our staff."

That support, an eager teaching staff and Davis' arrival got the ball rolling toward change. The school's adjusted accountability index in 2007 was 92. Novice rates have plummeted to 3.5 percent.

Davis and Leigh began working with teachers in the fall of 2001 to collect and analyze data and feedback from the audit report, the Department of Education's (KDE) Perception Survey and the Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT)/Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) reports.

"We determined early on that our certified staff would need to develop a broad-based knowledge of leadership and embrace a high level of leadership participation as we worked toward operating with collective autonomy," Davis said. "Much of this was initiated and developed as part of our work as a professional learning community."



Photo by Amy Wallot

Gloria Davis, center, reviews assessment results with teachers Mechele Watkins, left, and Julie Hale as part of her work at McKinney Elementary School (Lincoln County). Over the past seven years, Davis has been helping teachers find ways to increase student learning and reduce novice rates at McKinney Elementary.

The professional learning community meets one day each month. Substitute teachers go into classrooms so all teachers can participate. "I facilitate the planning and preparation for these meetings, but teacher leaders may take the lead role in specific areas, grade levels or improvement standards," Davis said.

Ongoing topics within the learning community include academic programs, student performance, system monitoring, professional growth, needs and concerns. "We work on the work both in smaller learning communities and with the whole staff as one community," Davis said.

Although mathematics was McKinney Elementary's primary concern, Davis knew it would still be necessary to involve all the school's teachers in the learning community.

"Math was our initial content-area focus as we struggled, learned, grew, revised and plodded along on our journey to become a proficient program," she said. "It was impossible to implement and experience the changes as part of a transformation process without those changes rippling through every crack and crevice in our school."

The work Davis was doing at McKinney was so critical to its success that the McKinney school council hired Davis to continue her work with the school after the National Science Foundation's supplemental award ended.

"Gloria came to our school with a wealth of

knowledge, training and experience in curriculum development, instructional strategies and assessment," Principal Leigh said. "Her unique ability to see things through the eyes of teachers and apply her training quickly personified her as a highly competent and valuable resource and as a means to gain knowledge for teachers and for myself."

Davis said helping McKinney toward a path of proficiency has been "the most rewarding experience of my career. Praise rightfully goes to the teachers and children. This couldn't have been accomplished without teachers accepting the challenge and exercising the professionalism and work ethic to give their best efforts for our children and community."

Booth and her work

While Davis has worked solely at McKinney Elementary, Ann Booth is helping several schools through her job at UK's PIMSER office.

She works with Pikeville (Independent), Johnson Central (Johnson County), Hopkins County Central and Madisonville-North Hopkins (Hopkins County) high schools, East and West Carter (Carter County) middle and high schools, and Lincoln County Middle School. She visits each school one day a month.

"PIMSER has developed a model to be used in schools to promote systemic change in math and science programs," Booth said. "If a school is interested in changing the way math and science are learned, it must agree to

implement the change model for at least two, and preferably three years. ... It takes a year to get buy-in from school personnel and to put changes in place. The second year is the year the changes are truly and fully implemented. The third year makes those changes part of the school culture.

"The model requires that every teacher who interacts with a math student must be part of the cadre," Booth added. "Those teachers are released eight days during the school year (for professional development) and also meet two days in the summer. After each meeting, the leadership team – the principal, several math teachers, a special-needs teacher, a parent and central office representative (among others) – reviews the work, removes barriers and plans next steps."

Pikeville High School, for example, is showing the benefits of this model. Booth has been working there since 2003. Her primary focus has been helping students improve their ACT scores. Over the past two years, Pikeville's ACT average has increased two points.

"Pikeville High and the administration partnered with Big Sandy Community and Technical College to teach a course for students (who had already passed both Algebra I and II) with ACT scores below 19," Booth said. "The first semester the class worked on algebra skills. The second semester, a professor from Big Sandy came three days a week and taught the college algebra course. The other two days the students worked on concepts and procedures with the high school teacher they had the first semester."

"Improvement comes for several reasons," Booth added. "The schools really want to improve or they would not commit to a systemic model that takes time and money. ... The teachers decided which area or areas they think they need the most improvement. All I do is find resources and facilitate the work. It also helps that I can be a truth teller. I don't have a dog in the fight and can say things about the elephant in the room, then get in my car and go home."

Pikeville High School Principal Royce Mayo said Booth has been instrumental in helping teachers help students make the most of their education.

"Our math teachers feel like she has been a tremendous help in analyzing our test scores and helping us improve our instructional practices," Mayo said. "Over the past three years our math scores on the ACT have exceeded both the state and national averages."

MORE INFO...

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Back in time

History immersion helps teachers prepare students today

By Matthew Tugate

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Though Jill Lewis started this school year a little bleary-eyed, she had a clear vision of what she wanted to share with her U.S. History students at Corbin (Independent) High School.

Lewis didn't get home from England until the Sunday night before school started on Monday. She had spent the previous week at Cambridge University studying the American civil rights movement.

Despite jet lag, lots of studying and long hours, Lewis and Paula Strain, a 5th-grade teacher at Alvaton Elementary (Warren County), agreed their professional development experiences last summer have enhanced their instruction this school year and enriched their students' learning. Strain spent a week studying early American history in Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia.

Working in England

The idea of rights and equality is important to Lewis as a woman, she said. She has seen the struggle in her home community of Corbin.

"I wanted to know how to teach it to my students who are not necessarily being raised in the most diverse environment, even though that is rapidly changing now," Lewis said. "The civil rights movement is something I really enjoy teaching. It is part of a unit I teach on the whole idea of American civil rights and liberties and how different groups over the years have had to fight to have those rights and liberties afforded to them."

Lewis was one of 30 teachers chosen from more than 200 applicants across the nation to attend the tuition-free seminar sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. She had five intense days of study in England. The teachers read newspapers; watched videos and movie clips; looked through photos; and listened to music from the civil rights era. Experts on the movement also talked with the group.

"They loaded you up with lots of material," she said. "In such a short span of time, it was nothing I could have collected on my own and put together as such an extensive content piece for me to use and learn from."

Each attendee had to find two primary-source documents and create critical-thinking questions based on those documents. Teachers got copies of all 60 projects to take

back to their classrooms.

Lewis used the projects when her classes studied the civil rights movement earlier this year. "I could pull out something dealing with women in the civil rights movement, something dealing with teenagers during the civil rights movement – all of the things I was teaching. I could put them in my students' hands right away and say, 'Here, look at this document and answer these questions.' It became an extension of what they were already doing in class."



Lewis

Working in Williamsburg

Dealing with primary sources also was a key component of Strain's experience as part of the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute in Early America History. Last July, Strain was immersed in Colonial American history in Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown, Va.

She received \$200 from the institute to buy teaching supplies, plus free materials and lesson-enhancing tools. She bought items representing everyday Colonial life that 5th-graders could relate to and that would raise their curiosity, such as smashed musket balls, quills and ink.

"I came home with an absolutely different view on primary sources," Strain said. "I looked at primary sources as documents that you just read. I never really hit on furniture, clothing and tools to tell the story of history – until this experience."

The 26 teachers met with a Colonial America expert each day who modeled what teachers could do in their classrooms, Strain said. She kept a rigorous schedule from 7 a.m. until 8:30 p.m.

"People shouldn't sign up if they don't want to work, because you're going to work," Strain said. "It's school, but magnificent to be in the actual place you have told children about for years."

Orin Simmerman, director of the Kentucky Department of Education's Division of Leadership and Instructional Support, works to ensure districts provide high-quality professional development opportunities for teachers. Immersion programs such as those Lewis and Strain participated in generally "allow those teachers to bring to life some of the things they talk about in their classes and help them relate that to their students' lives, having experienced that for themselves," he said.



Photos submitted

Paula Strain, a 5th-grade teacher at Alvaton Elementary (Warren County), takes her turn at measuring the altitude of the sun using a backstaff, which sailors in the 16th century used to determine latitude at sea.

"The question you have to ask is, 'How do you make those events real to that student?'" he said. "They should be teaching Kentucky Core Content and Program of Studies, regardless of what kind of activities they're participating in. Just because they're going and experiencing these things, doesn't mean that's translating into student achievement."

Content 'dead-on'

Strain said the Colonial Williamsburg seminar fit directly into Kentucky's Program of Studies and Core Content for Assessment.

"In our core content for social studies, this was dead-on, especially with primary and secondary sources," she said. "Our students have to do a lot of open-response writing with primary and secondary sources. We have to help students understand how America was born, who the first people were, how we acquired land, why people came here – that is core content for 5th graders in Kentucky."

Students also have to know the reasons for the original settlements, as well as the major events leading to the Revolutionary War, Strain said.

"I'm still referring back to my trip to Williamsburg and pictures to help the kids remember," she said. "When I teach economics, I have to teach colonial trade and river transportation, and how they paid for things and what was the demand. How American economics grew its roots from a colonial standpoint, as well as how it compares to modern times, that's 5th-grade core content."

Lewis said she spends two or three days on the civil rights movement of the 1960s as

part of a month-long unit on American civil rights. Other parts of the unit are women's rights, Native Americans' rights and Hispanic Americans' rights.

"The core content wants us to address the push for social justice in the 20th century and specifically mentions teaching about Dr. (Martin Luther) King Jr. and his 'I Have A Dream' speech," she said. "We analyze the speech during the unit on civil rights and liberties as well as his 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail,' which was a primary-source document project I received from another teacher while at Cambridge."

"The more hands-on history you study, the more you're going to make your history hands-on for your students. I think that what's important about history is that students don't see this as something that's dry and dull and boring, that this is something that is very much hands-on that they can discover and they can learn, and it's something they can keep with them," Lewis said.

Both teachers agreed that they benefited from being around other committed teachers from throughout the nation for a week.

"The more time you get to spend with teachers who are very involved, really care and want to be better teachers, I think it encourages all of us and makes each one of us feel like we can go back into the trenches and do a good job," Lewis said.

MORE INFO ...

<http://gilderlehrman.org/teachers/seminars1.html>

www.history.org/history/teaching/tchstigl.cfm

Lean budget session does lit

By Matthew Tungate

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Teachers across Kentucky will receive 1 percent raises each of the next two years as part of the state's \$19 billion budget, which contains cuts to major P-12 programs and does not fund numerous public education programs.

Education Commissioner Jon E. Draud noted that the cuts will have a direct, negative effect on individual students and teachers.

- The Extended School Services program, which provides extra help for students who are falling behind, will be curtailed. Students who are struggling may experience even greater disappointment and frustration.
- The cut to professional development funds decreases opportunities for teachers and administrators to improve their abilities to teach and lead.
- A lack of funding for safe school programs will stymie efforts to reduce substance abuse and vio-

lence in schools.

"(The budget bill) requires hard decisions by our public school administrators and this agency," Draud said. "Which children will get the help they need? How are teachers going to get additional training? What happens to the momentum that many schools are experiencing on the road to proficiency, and what about those schools that are struggling?"

The budget continues to call for the equivalent of 177 six-hour instructional days – two days more than in the 2005-06 calendar. It also gives the education commissioner greater ability to waive the 177-day policy for schools with alternative calendars or scheduling hardships.

Draud expressed his dismay at the budget and said the Kentucky Department of Education won't be able to fill positions that help local school districts.

"The department has lost 219 positions since 2001 and we're going to lose another 28 this year," Draud

said. "We've already cut back dramatically in terms of personnel. We're going to have to be able to fill those positions or, if we can't, we're just not going to be able to provide services to the school districts. That's just the reality."

(For specific items affecting education in the budget, see the Commissioner's Comments on Page 3).

Besides the budget, the legislature also passed other bills affecting public education.

Deputy Education Commissioner Kevin Noland, who oversees the department's legal and legislative efforts, said several of the board's legislative priorities passed, including allowing superintendents to replace principals in low-performing schools after two years, making it easier for local school boards to give refurbished computers to low-income students and providing districts more flexibility in using capital-outlay funds.

Education bills passed by the 2008 General Assembly are:

Issue: Energy conservation

Bill number: HB 2

Effect(s) on teachers: Schools should become more energy efficient.

Summary: Each school district must enroll in the Kentucky Energy Efficiency Program by Jan. 1, 2010, to get information about potential energy savings for every district-owned building. The Department of Workforce Investment will establish an energy technology career track. Beginning July 1, 2009, any renovation or new construction paid for with 50 percent or more public money will have to meet high-performance building standards.

Issue: Speech-language pathologist

Bill number: HB 29

Effect(s) on teachers: Speech-language pathologists certified by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) are exempt from state licensing, while non-certified speech-language pathologists are required to be licensed.

Summary: A speech-language pathologist working as a classified school employee holding teacher certification in communications disorders does not need a license issued by the state Board of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, but those without a teaching certificate in communications disorders do need a license. School boards may designate the position as either classified or certified.

Issue: Student behavior and safety

Bill number: HB 91

Effect(s) on teachers: School discipline codes will need to be revised, and teachers must report incidents of serious student harassment, cyberbullying and criminal behavior when they become aware of them.

Summary: School districts must include policies in their student codes of behavior for dealing with harassment and harassing communications. School personnel must report felonies to the principal, who must provide a written report to the local school board, law enforcement and parents of

students involved; schools must report incidents of discipline for serious offenses in their statewide data reports; and the Department of Education must annually report certain offenses.

Issue: Student enrollment

Bill number: HB 186

Effect(s) on teachers: Student dental needs will be identified prior to entering school.

Summary: Beginning in the 2010-11 school year, 5- and 6-year-old children entering school for the first time must provide evidence of a dental screening or exam.

Issue: Sexual relations between adults and minors

Bill number: HB 211

Effect(s) on teachers: Anyone older than 21 or in a position of authority or special trust with students is prohibited from engaging in sex or masturbation with a minor of any age.

Summary: A person older than 21 is prohibited from subjecting a minor under 16 to sexual contact or engaging in masturbation in the minor's presence, and the law prohibits a person in a position of authority or special trust from doing the same with a minor under 18, both in person and using an electronic communication device. The law also increases penalties for intentionally failing to report that a child is dependent, neglected or abused, and increases the criminal statute of limitations for misdemeanor sexual offenses when the victim is younger than 18.

Issue: Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System

Bill number: HB 470

Effect(s) on teachers: Adjusts retirement eligibility, service credit and return-to-work provisions.

Summary: Teachers will be allowed to take their annual and sick leave and service credits with them if they take a job within the executive branch of state government. This law also excludes award programs from annual compensation, says that sick leave can't be used to meet the retirement eligibility, requires out-of-state teaching service to be purchased



Photo by Amy Walliot

Real guys read

Travis Cundiff, center, a senior at West Carter County High School (Carter County), discusses a book he is reading with Cody Arthurs, left, Austin Carter and Ben Jordan, 4th-graders at Upper Tygart Elementary, as other seniors on the football team read with groups of boys from the elementary school. Alex Williams, a West Carter High senior, wrote a successful National Educators Association (NEA) Youth Literacy Grant to fund a six-week program that paired 15 senior football players with approximately 30 4th- and 5th-grade boys for one hour of reading each week to show the younger students the importance of reading. The younger boys and their reading role models will collaborate to spend the \$500 grant to purchase books that boys want to read for the Upper Tygart library media center.

ittle for education

at full actuarial value and clarifies which leave and out-of-state service time may be purchased. Non-qualified service credit may not count toward qualifying to return to work at 75 percent of a teacher's last annual salary, but out-of-state service credit will. Retirees may return to work at the lowest rank and step on their district's salary schedule without affecting their retirement benefits. Retirees may, funding permitting, receive ad hoc cost-of-living increases, with a catch-up increase for the first year of the biennium. The law authorizes the Department of Education to employ retired members in full-time or part-time teaching and nonteaching positions to serve on Scholastic Audit teams and to provide technical assistance to schools and districts required under federal law without the limitations on compensation otherwise required under KRS 61.680. The department will be subject to the same requirements related to employing retired employees as local school districts, except the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System will determine the maximum number of employees that may be employed in this manner.

Issue: Alternative certification
Bill number: HB 607

Effect(s) on teachers: Makes veterans with extensive National Guard or Reserve experience eligible for alternate certification.

Summary: National Guard or Reserve veterans who have 10 years of active duty service, 10 years of service officially credited toward armed services retirement or 10 years' combination of such service are eligible for alternate certification to teach in Kentucky if other requirements regarding bachelor's degree, GPA and passing score on content assessment are met.

Issue: School health services
Bill number: HB 640

Effect(s) on teachers: When funding is provided, more schools will have access to school nurses.

Summary: Family Resource or

Youth Services centers may apply for a grant from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to fund employment of a physician or nurse. The grant program may receive appropriations, gifts or other contributions without reducing the amount of the Family Resource/Youth Services Center grants.

Issue: Mathematics and science education

Bill number: SB 2

Effect(s) on teachers: Provides support for teachers to increase the number of students prepared for and taking advanced mathematics and science courses in Kentucky when funding is provided, and it may require changes in course offerings.

Summary: The legislature created a science and mathematics advancement fund aimed at improving students' mathematics and science knowledge from elementary school through college. The money will be used for professional-development grants for teachers; to pay student fees for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) tests; to establish and expand certain advanced science and mathematics courses; to provide grants for middle and high schools; and for grants to districts to create an energy-technology engineering career track. Each middle and high school will be required to have one trained online coach. All middle and high school curricula will have to include prerequisite courses for AP calculus, chemistry and physics. All high schools will need to provide at least one mathematics and one science AP, IB, dual credit or enrollment course. High school students with required prerequisite courses will be admitted to courses offering college credit, and students will receive credit toward graduation for AP courses taken through Kentucky Virtual High School if the student's school doesn't offer those courses. The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science at Western Kentucky University may award sole or joint high

school diplomas with local school districts.

Issue: Alternative teacher certification.

Bill number: SB 64

Effect(s) on teachers: Creates support for individuals seeking certification. No funding is provided.

Summary: Agencies, including universities, school districts and educational cooperatives, could receive incentives to train those with mathematics and science degrees who want to become certified to teach, as well as help teachers in other fields become re-certified in mathematics and science, with a priority on high school mathematics, chemistry, integrated science and physics, and middle school mathematics and earth science. The bill also would create a loan-forgiveness program to attract such individuals to the teaching fields. It also allows the Teacher's Professional Growth Fund to be used for professional development and makes increasing the number of teachers with endorsements in mathematics and science the priority for 2010-16.

Issue: Educational opportunities for military children

Bill number: SB 68

Effect(s) on teachers: The law eases the process by which schools get educational records for students whose parents are in the military.

Summary: This law establishes Kentucky's participation in a compact with other states that agree to remove barriers to educational success for children who frequently move because their parents are active duty military or have been disabled or killed within the last year. The law establishes policies for enrollment, transferring educational records, attendance, course assignments related to graduation requirements and participation in extracurricular activities.

Issue: Principal selection

Bill number: SB 86

Effect(s) on teachers: District superintendents, not school councils, will select principals at certain Level 3 schools.

Summary: The superintendent will



Photo by Amy Wallot

Brenden Freeland, front left, and other 4th graders in Darla Becker's class complete an online mathematics assignment at Burgin (Independent) School. With the passage of Senate Bill 129 during the 2008 General Assembly session, low-income Kentucky students will have the opportunity to have refurbished school computers in their homes.

select the principal if a vacancy occurs at a school with an index score in the lowest one-third of all schools below the assistance line and a Scholastic Audit finds a lack of effectiveness of the principal and the school council.

Issue: Materials procurement

Bill number: SB 100

Effect(s) on teachers: Winning bids for some items may not be for the brand requested.

Summary: Public institutions, including school districts, putting out bids will have to consider items equal to those named or described for consideration. Specific brands may be required in bids under certain circumstances.

Issue: School districts' surplus technology

Bill number: SB 129

Effect(s) on teachers: More low-income students may receive computers for home.

Summary: Local school boards may adopt policies for giving refurbished surplus technology to low-income students.

Issue: Employment, salary and duties notification

Bill number: SB 157

Effect(s) on teachers: Teachers will know later that they are not being retained, but earlier about pay and duty changes and have more time to terminate their contracts.

Summary: The date schools must notify certified and classified school staff for nonrenewal of contracts was changed from April 30 to May 15; the date for

salary notification for certified staff was changed from 45 days before school starts to 45 days before school starts or by June 15, whichever occurs earlier; the date for notification of any reduction of duties for certified staff was changed from 90 days before school starts to 90 days before school starts or by May 15, whichever occurs earlier; the time a teacher has to terminate his or her contract is reduced from 30 days prior to the first instructional day to 15 days prior to the first instructional day at the school to which the teacher is assigned.

Issue: Curriculum guides for teaching about genocide and the Holocaust

Bill number: HJR 6

Effect(s) on teachers: Provides additional resources for teaching about genocide inflicted on millions of Jews and other religious and ethnic groups in Germany under the Nazi regime.

Summary: The Kentucky Department of Education is to review Holocaust and genocide curricula developed by other states by Sept. 1, 2008, and develop and disseminate to local schools a curriculum guide that may be used to teach about the Holocaust as an example of genocide by March 1, 2009.

MORE INFO ...

www.lrc.ky.gov/record/08RS/PAS_L.htm

Program assessment monitors improvement in technical education

By Tim Thornberry
Education Cabinet

The words "program assessment" don't appear in the dictionary together but defined separately – and to paraphrase Merriam-Webster – they mean "a way to determine the importance, size or value of a plan or system under which action may be taken toward a goal."

At the core of program assessment in technical education is the expectation of continuous improvement of career and technical education (CTE) programs. Myra Wilson, program assessment branch supervisor for the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), said Kentucky career-and-technical educators need to remember that quality CTE programs provide the foundation for increased student achievement.

"Program assessment sets standards to provide statewide consistency of career and technical programs. As a result, CTE students benefit in academic and technical achievement," Wilson said. "Data collected from program-assessment visits show improvement in both locally and state-operated schools."

"Examples of improvements include increased participation in student organizations and work-based learning, safer classrooms and labs, inclusion of academic content in instruction, more par-

ticipation by advisory committee members, improved planning, and increased use of recommended curriculum and identification of courses that link to dual credit," she added.

She offers words of encouragement to teachers. "We know program assessment is a difficult issue for some, and we want teachers and administrators to know we are here to assist in any way. Doing well with assessment is best accomplished when it becomes a continuous process and not something done a few days before a visit," said Wilson.

"The program-assessment process will continue," said John Marks, executive director of OCTE. "However, we are open to suggestions from teachers and administrators on how it may be improved. We are willing to listen and change the process, if necessary, without compromising the good of our students."

Linda Floyd, an area supervisor for OCTE, has seen both sides of program assessment. She is a former principal at an area technology center and now serves in an administrative capacity for several schools.

"Any great system utilizes a quality assessment tool and standardization that can present challenges when you have so many tech centers

spread out across the state. The program-assessment process, however, allows us 17 standards whereby all programs can be assessed using the same criteria. I believe everyone can benefit from this process, especially those schools where everyone is involved, including the principal, secretary, maintenance personnel and teachers," she said.

James Hardin, principal at Southside Technical Center in Lexington, said, "When this assessment process is used in the manner for which it was intended, it serves as a valuable tool for program improvement and, consequently, school-wide improvement. Ultimately, the students are the benefactors of this assessment. It provides teachers and the school administration with evidence that promotes continuous improvement in curriculum and delivery methods alongside updated facilities plans for the school."

Martha Williams, a health sciences teacher at Martin County Area Technology Center, has been through the procedure and scored the highest marks possible. Still, she said that while valuable, the process could use some modifications.

Jim Stone of the National Center for Research in Career and Technical Education recently discussed Kentucky's program-assessment process with a group of CTE teachers



Photo by Tim Thornberry, Education Cabinet

Bob Hayes, team leader and university educator, left, Jeff Phelps of the Bowling Green Technical College and Larry Helphinstine, Kentucky Department of Education career and technical education consultant, review program-assessment documents during a recent visit to the Warren County Area Technology Center.

and principals.

"One recommendation was that we hold a series of face-to-face meetings across the state with teachers and principals to get better insight as to what we can do to improve the process, the buy-in, as well as the quality of program assessment in Kentucky," Wilson said.

She suggests six steps to help boost program-assessment scores and make the process more manageable by incorporating the two main concepts for program-assessment success: knowledge of the process and organization. Those steps include:

- Prepare "totes" at the beginning of the school year with hanging folders for each standard and individual, labeled folders for

subsections of each standard.

- Use a monitoring schedule to break the process into small pieces and start the process early.
- Use the program-assessment checklist to record each item placed in a tote to have a quick snapshot of needed documentation.
- Refer to <http://kytech.ky.gov/programassessment.htm>.
- Become familiar with the program-assessment document and refer to it often.
- Read the instructions in the document and on the Web site and refer to them often.

MORE INFO ...

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High schools can send transcripts electronically to colleges using GoHigherKY.org

More and more Kentucky students are turning to the GoHigherKy.org Web site for information to help them plan, prepare and pay for college. A new feature allows high school seniors to request that their transcripts be sent electronically to Kentucky colleges.

The Transcript Exchange System is a free service of the Web site. High school counselors in participating Kentucky high schools can send the transcripts electronically on an encrypted, secure connection to administrators at participating colleges and universities.

High school counselors and post-secondary administrators can send

and receive transcripts for one or many students at a time. Students can request that their high school transcripts be sent to several Kentucky colleges and universities.

About 45 high schools and colleges participate. Northern Kentucky University, Thomas More College, the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky are among the top users of both the Transcript Exchange System and the online admission application through GoHigherKY.org.

Simon Kenton High School (Kenton County) transmitted the first live transcript to Northern Kentucky University on Nov. 8, 2007. Debbie Sweeney, the student

records supervisor for the Kenton County school district, likes the system.

"The personnel from the Kenton County school district feel the live transcript transmittal will be very beneficial to both students and staff," she said. "The program will save both time and money for the district."

GoHigherKY.org is a one-stop Web site for college and career planning administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) and The Student Loan People. Students in grades 8–12, parents, college students, adult students and guidance counselors can use the site.

Students can run free scholarship searches, transfer information to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and apply to colleges online. The college planning section provides checklists for students in grades 8–12.

Beginning with the junior year, the site provides a month-by-month list of actions college-bound students should take. The college-planning section also allows students to keep track of their courses and grades as they go through high school.

"This program will really get any seniors that take time to do it all the information they need to know. This will really help me

make some very serious decisions for my future," said Ben Hall, a senior at Betsy Layne High School (Floyd County).

The Counselor Center helps counselors track their students' progress through the college admissions process and allows them to combine their calendar of events with students' calendars and communicate with students via online chats and e-mails.

MORE INFO ...

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CPS technology enhances reading skills for Owen County primary students

By Mary Inman

Owen County Schools

The upper primary teachers at Owen County Elementary School are excited about the technology they are using in their classrooms to significantly improve student reading comprehension. Classroom Performance System (CPS) allows teachers and students to get away from the traditional paper-and-pencil method of drill and practice and use a more interactive, student-friendly method of finding out what students know and can do.

CPS is simple to use, all students are actively engaged, and the academic rewards are evident. The CPS software is installed on each teacher's computer, and the receiver unit is connected to the computer through a USB port.

Students receive numbered response pads linked to each child's name on an individual roster within the software. The response pad has letter buttons (A – H), which allow up to eight possible answer choices if needed. The teacher can ask multiple-choice, true/false and yes/no questions using CPS.

The teacher displays the first question or reading passage on the screen, and students click in their answers. After all students have responded, the correct answer is displayed, and the students have immediate feedback to show the number of students that selected each option. At the end of the CPS session, the teacher can generate a variety of reports and graphs that allow him or her to see which students have the skill mastered, which students need some additional practice and which students need one-on-one intervention.

As a Reading First school, we administer the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and use the results to analyze the reading strengths and weaknesses of our students so that we may better meet individual student needs. Reading comprehension (sentence and passage) is a weakness of our upper primary students.

After analyzing the GRADE results, our teaching team created sentence- and passage-comprehension practice items that we entered into the CPS software on our individual computers. This process is quick and easily mastered. Other educators in our district can access the practice items and assessments through the shared computer network drive to use in their classrooms.

At Owen County Elementary, upper primary teachers rotate preparing assessments and specific skill practices. This saves work time and provides our school and the district with a large database of lessons to choose



Photos by Amy Wallot

Tristen Penn, left, Lydia Merrifield, Austin Brown and Jordan Willhoite, students at Owen County Elementary, show their excitement as their teacher Mary Inman reveals the answer to a reading comprehension practice item using the remote tablet and stylus of the Classroom Performance System.

from to address individual student needs.

"This is a very effective way to augment the reading core program, engage students in instructional conversations and provide corrective feedback that is immediate," Owen County's Reading First State Coach Ruthie Staley said. "It is a very innovative way to align the core program's reading skills and strategies and in the process students are having fun learning!"

The CPS has tremendously increased student motivation in my classroom. It is a challenge and competition for students to see how many questions the entire class can answer correctly.

Students have improved in all areas of reading comprehension (predicting, clarifying, questioning and more). From August to December, the percentage of upper primary students who were above the 50th percentile on total comprehension GRADE scores increased by 11 percent.

Another method of assessment at Owen County Elementary is ThinkLink. We administer this computerized assessment three times during the school year. At the beginning of this school year, about 50 percent of upper primary students were performing at the proficient level in reading. Today, more than 80 percent are at the proficient level! CPS was a huge factor in contributing to the overall increase in student performance.

Time often works against us in the class-

room. Spending just 10 to 20 minutes, three days a week, working on specific reading skills can make a huge difference with student performance.

If time does not allow teachers to create their own practice materials, CPS is compatible with Study Island, an educator's Web site that allows students to practice skills across the curriculum from school or at home. (To access the Web site, go to www.studyisland.com and enter Kentucky in the drop-down state menu.)

Our school pays a fee to allow us to have a school site license for Study Island. Each topic in Study Island contains straightforward lessons and Kentucky Core Content Test-like questions.

When the students use Study Island individually, the teacher and the students can track their progress. However, when paired with CPS in the classroom, the teacher can readily use this storehouse of information with an entire class.

With a touch of the finger, I can select the skill I want my students to practice, and it immediately displays on my classroom screen. I get immediate feedback on students' answers and can use Study Island to prepare the data in graphs and reports as well.

The upper primary students at Owen County Elementary have made huge gains in their academic achievement because



At top, Morgan Ellis stretches to make certain her remote-response pad records her answer while Austin Fitzgerald, below, thinks about his answer before pressing the response pad during a reading comprehension practice session in Mary Inman's upper primary class at Owen County Elementary.

they are enjoying learning more when they use classroom technology. No matter what common assessment a school uses, I feel confident teachers in other schools will see gains using the CPS in reading and all other subject areas.

If children are actively engaged and excited about reading, the results will become evident. CPS has become a part of our weekly reading assessment routine.

Mary Inman is an upper primary teacher at Owen County Elementary School. To learn more about using the Classroom Performance System to augment a reading core program, contact her at (502) 484-4095, mary.inman@owen.kyschools.us.

Baird and Akins talk about public education

Each month, *Kentucky Teacher* is profiling one or more of the 11 appointed members to the Kentucky Board of Education. This issue, Katharine Baird of Pikeville and C.B. Akins Sr. of Lexington give their thoughts on public education.

Baird followed mother's lead into education field

Kaye Baird graduated from Union College with a bachelor's degree in English and has a bachelor's in elementary education from Pikeville College. She has taught kindergarten and 1st grade. Baird has served as a member of the Pikeville Independent Board of Education and the Model City Day Care board.

She is an elder in the Pikeville Presbyterian Church and serves on the Kentucky Presbyterian Homes and Services Board and the education committee of the Pike County Chamber of Commerce.

Baird serves on the state board of education's Management Committee. Her term expires in April 2010. Here are her answers to questions posed by *Kentucky Teacher*.



Baird

Other than parents and teachers, who – or what – has made the biggest effect on our students' educations in the last few years in your opinion?

Good leadership in our districts makes a huge difference in our students' educations.

Is there an event in your past that helped you decide to become involved in education?

My mother taught in the public school system for 39 years. She wanted every student to achieve. She encouraged me to become a teacher and that led to my involvement in many levels of education.

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

My 7th-grade teacher insisted that we learn the parts of speech by having us diagram sentences. I can't say we liked what she required at the time, but I know what she taught me certainly helped in Latin class and when I majored in English.

What will teachers need most from future boards?

We must visit with teachers and listen to their concerns and take into consideration what their needs are and act accordingly.

What would you like to accomplish that you haven't yet as a board member?

In my area of the state, which is most of eastern Kentucky, I would like to see an education symposium much like the folks of northern Kentucky held in the fall of 2007. I want the same enthusiasm for our students to be high achievers from school leaders, teachers, civic leaders, businesspeople and the entire area.

What small change would have the greatest impact on Kentucky's schools?

We need to change attitudes from "We can't" to "We can" and believe we can all succeed.

What do you want Kentucky's past and current teachers to know about you?

I taught briefly at the kindergarten and 1st-grade levels. My husband and I reared three daughters, and we encouraged them through their educational endeavors. We wanted them to be lifelong learners, and now we are encouraging our grandchildren to read and love learning.

Akins wants goals just out of reach to push continuous improvement

C.B. Akins Sr. was born in Tennessee and reared in southern Illinois. He served in the U.S. Air Force as an interpreter and an instructor. He has studied eight languages.

Akins received his bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky and his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees from Lexington Theological Seminary. He is the author of "From Burden to Blessings" and has served as senior pastor of First Baptist Bracktown in Lexington since 1983. He serves on the board of directors of Commerce Lexington, the Fayette Education Foundation, the Bluegrass Community Trust and First Bracktown Inc.



Akins

Akins is a member of the state board's Management Committee. His term expires in April 2010.

Where is education in Kentucky headed in your opinion?

Education is on an upward trend. Kentucky has been recognized as being on the cutting edge in the area of reform. However, we must not rest on accomplishments of past decades. We must continue to seek a higher goal and always move the targets to new levels so that we are constantly improving but never quite achieving. Success, if not properly gauged, can be a great deterrent to future growth and development.

If you could 'pick the brain' of another person, past or present, who would it be?

George Washington Carver is someone I would like to have alive today. Raised by slave owners, he showed early talent as an artist but chose to pursue the field of agriculture. His many products from the peanut are exemplary of his ability to see in the common things of life the uncommon good that is often left dormant. If his acknowledgment of the necessity of building strong relationships among the races would be allowed to permeate the decisions we make every day, this world would be a much better place to live.

What would you like to accomplish that you haven't yet as a board member?

I long for the day when I am assured that every child is exposed to an excellent teacher every day. I want to help equip every school in Kentucky to be a strong learning environment for all children, an environment that is welcoming and embracing of diverse cultures and diverse learning styles with high expectations for all children.

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

Helen Murphy, my high school English teacher, was my favorite teacher because she saw potential in me and expressed confidence in me that I would fulfill that potential. She made sure that I knew if I did not do it anywhere else, I would do it in her classroom. She was one who had high expectations of all her students, even in southern Illinois in the late '60s when black kids were not considered college material. She laid the groundwork for my career as a public speaker.

Other than parents and teachers, who – or what – has made the biggest effect on our students' educations in the last few years in your opinion?

Locally, I would say it has been the concerned cries of parents and community members who boldly initiated grassroots efforts

to ensure that all children receive a quality education. Coupled with this has been the awakening of local businesses to the imperativeness of their involvement in the educational system to help produce a quality work force. At the state level, one of the greatest factors has been the passing of legislation that insists on disaggregation of school scores so that subpopulations can be identified and screened for successes or deficiencies.

Other than more money, what do Kentucky public schools need most?

Kentucky schools need personnel who will focus on what they can control and not what they cannot control. We can either use the lack of money for an excuse or we can find ways to accomplish the desired end with the money available. I trust we have the right people in leadership who will see and seize the exigency of using what we have to maximize efficiency.

What are the biggest obstacles facing Kentucky children?

One of the biggest obstacles facing Kentucky children can possibly be adults in positions of authority who are not willing to have courageous conversations about those things that are necessary for change.

Talk to Us!



Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail: kyteacher@education.ky.gov

Phone: (502) 564-2000

Fax: (502) 564-3049

Write: Kentucky Teacher

612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.

Frankfort, KY 40601

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

U.S. Education Secretary says No Child Left Behind working in Kentucky

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings highlighted progress toward No Child Left Behind goals during visits recently at Mason County Intermediate School (Mason County) and Fourth Street Elementary School (Newport Independent). She also participated in two education policy roundtables with educators, students, college presidents, and business and community leaders hosted by U.S. Rep. Geoff Davis, 4th Congressional District.

Secretary Spellings applauded Kentucky's progress in raising student achievement in both reading and mathematics and at all levels, especially noting improvements among low-income students. "We can be proud of the progress made under No Child Left Behind in Kentucky and across the nation," Spellings said. "And Kentucky also deserves credit for its leadership in developing high-quality assessments, including tests in seven subject areas."

She challenged the state to keep working to increase the number of students who receive supplemental educational services (SES). She said only 8.5 percent of Kentucky's eligible students participate in SES, compared to the national average of 14.5 percent. She also challenged Kentucky to increase the percentage of students taking Advanced Placement exams (19.6 percent of Kentucky students take the exams, compared to 24.9 percent nationally).

Spellings also discussed a new pilot program that will help states differentiate between underperforming schools in need of major interventions and those that are closer to meeting the goals of No Child Left Behind.

"We've built an appetite for change, and we've done a good job of framing the problem," she said. "The next step is to use this knowledge to customize our efforts to improve."

Mason County Superintendent Tim Moore took part in the Maysville roundtable. Kentucky Education Commissioner Jon E. Draud and Newport Independent Superintendent Michael Brandt participated in the discussion at Fourth Street Elementary.

In addition, Spellings discussed a new tool recently released by the U.S. Department of Education, "Mapping Kentucky's Educational Progress 2008," which provides a look at the state's No Child Left Behind comparative indicators.

To view "Mapping Kentucky's Educational Progress 2008," visit www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/results/progress/kentucky.pdf.

Report discusses transition from school to adult life

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has released a report on the transition from high school to college and careers titled "Lost in Transition: Building a Better Path from School to College and Careers." The report says, "Too many high schools focus their academics and guidance on students who plan to enroll in four-year colleges, overlooking the many students who will enter community colleges, technical schools or the workplace. As a result, a significant percentage of students are dropping out of high school and are on a lifetime path to low-wage jobs or unemployment."

Kentucky is mentioned frequently in the report, since it was one of 15 states that hosted High Schools That Work forums in 2005 and 2006. The forums helped identify ways to foster collaboration between secondary and postsecondary education systems and work toward successful transitions.

The report summarizes the findings of the forums and makes recommendations for state-level action. The primary findings are:

- Students must have a vision of the future.
- Students must be ready for both college and careers.
- Every student must have good reasons to finish high school.
- Students must not waste time in weak dual-enrollment courses.
- Students must be held to common college-readiness standards.
- Students must not be deceived by the "open-admissions" message.
- Students must have more support to complete community college.

The full report may be downloaded at www.sreb.org/publications/2008/08V01LostInTransition.asp.

Kentucky Education Issues on Web and cable TV

The newest episodes of *Kentucky Education Issues*, a television program hosted by Education Commissioner Jon E. Draud, are available on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site, Insight Cable in northern Kentucky and its affiliates in the state, and the Kentucky Channel (KET3).

To access the program online, go to www.education.ky.gov and click on the "Kentucky Education Issues" logo in the left-hand menu. Check local TV listings for cable and KET time slots.

During the half-hour program, Commissioner Draud talks with leading educators



Photo by Amy Wallot

Finding the pulse of good health

Patricia Glass, district school nurse and health coordinator for Jessamine County school district, checks the blood pressure of a 6th-grade student at The Providence School. Glass and four part-time nurses work in district schools to monitor health and nutrition problems that may be barriers to student learning. On May 7, National School Nurse Day, schools across the country will recognize the work of school nurses in providing health services and wellness activities that keep students in school and learning.

and policy makers concerning topics important to students, teachers and taxpayers.

Kentucky Board of Education Chairman Joe Brothers and Vice-Chair Bonnie Lash Freeman talk about public education in Kentucky, the role of the state board and plans for reaching the goal of proficiency for all students by 2014 in Program No. 4.

Kentucky Education Issues is produced by the department's Virtual Learning Branch.

KSBA is seeking assistant policy director

The Kentucky School Boards Association is advertising a Frankfort-based, full-time position for assistant policy director. The position oversees the day-to-day maintenance of public school district policies, procedures and other services for assigned districts.

The position requires a minimum of a master's degree in education or related field (English major/minor preferred) and a minimum of three years of classroom experience, administrative experience or experience in a related field. Work involves light travel.

The position offers a full employee benefit package, including membership in the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Interested applicants will need to submit a cover letter, resume, current references, college transcripts and salary history/requirements to: Kathy Amburgey, HR manager, Kentucky School Boards Association, 260 Democrat Dr., Frankfort, KY 40601; kathy.amburgey@ksba.org; phone (502) 695-4630 or toll free (800) 372-2962; or fax (502) 695-5451.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallot

Fourth Street Elementary (Newport Independent)

Conferences

Library media specialists

The annual Kentucky School Media Association conference will be held July 8 at Jeffersontown High School Magnet Career Academy in Louisville. Participants will share ideas, discuss issues and examine new technology. An ice cream social, hosted by the academy, will be held July 7. Registration deadline is June 9.

www.kysma.org

Kentucky history education

"Abraham Lincoln and Kentucky" is the theme for the annual Kentucky History Education Conference July 9 in Frankfort. The conference will include sessions exploring content, resources and teaching ideas. Presenters receive free registration to the conference and 50 student admissions to the museums of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Contact: Vicky Middleswarth, (502) 564-1792, vicky.middleswarth@ky.gov

Kentucky Reading Association

The Kentucky Reading Association is accepting program proposals for its annual conference, "Literacy for a Lifetime," which will be Sept. 25-27 at the Galt House in Louisville. The deadline for submitting proposals is May 31.

Contact: Tammy Board, (859) 749-3814, tammy.board@lincoln.kyschools.us

www.kyreading.org

Title I

The 30th annual Title I Regional Conference will be Nov. 9-11 in Owensboro. The Center for Cultural and Professional Development, Green River Regional Educational Cooperative and West Kentucky Educational Cooperative sponsor the conference. The conference theme is "30 Years Cultivating Excellence." Featured speakers include author and writing consultant Melissa Forney and Salome Thomas-El, author of the best-selling book "I Choose to Stay" and principal of the Russell Byers Public Charter School in Philadelphia.

www.grrec.ky.gov

Events

'With Malice Toward None'

The Kentucky Repertory Theatre at Horse Cave is now booking sites for its nationwide tour of "With Malice Toward None," a multimedia production that highlights President Abraham Lincoln's speeches, letters and dramatic episodes set in the context of the Civil

War. Schools and districts with auditorium space to stage the production or access to a local performing arts center can book performances at a discounted rate between Feb. 10, 2009, and March 22, 2009.

Contact: Kentucky Repertory Theatre, toll free (800) 342-2177

KAHPERD workshop

The Kentucky Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance will hold its Summer Physical Education Workshop June 9-10 in Louisville at Highland Middle School. Registration deadline is June 1.

www.kahpemd.com/07/index.asp?pageID=1&pageDetails=70

Legacy of Jefferson Davis

Kentucky native Jefferson Davis is the topic of a day-long symposium June 27 at the Kentucky Historical Society in Frankfort. This year marks the 200th anniversary of Davis' birth. Civil War scholar and author William J. Cooper will speak. Events include two topical panels and a roundtable discussion. Registration deadline is June 20. Seating is limited to the first 200 people.

Contact: Julia Curry at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4414, julia.curry@ky.gov

<http://kylincoln.org/events/jefferson.htm>

Education outreach performances

The Kentucky Repertory Theatre at Horse Cave has education outreach performances scheduled for the fall:

- "Abraham Lincoln," Aug. 22-Nov. 1
- "To Kill a Mockingbird," Oct. 3-Nov. 15
- "Amadeus," Oct. 24-Nov. 15
- "King Lear," Nov. 21-Dec. 4

Contact: Kentucky Repertory Theatre, toll free (800) 342-2177

'Project Archaeology'

A "Project Archaeology" workshop for educators will be held June 13-14 in Greenville at the Duncan Museum and Art Gallery. Project Archaeology is part of a national heritage education program that introduces students to the process of archaeology and teaches them to appreciate and protect our nation's rich cultural heritage. It supports the K-12 curriculum with hands-on activities.

Contact: Shara Snodgrass, (270) 338-2605, duncanmuseum@ocdirect.net

Nominations being accepted for Teacher Hall of Fame

Nominations are being accepted for the 2009 class of inductees into the Louie B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame. Candidates

must have served at least 19 years as a teacher, including 10 years in a Kentucky school containing any grades P-12. The nomination form is online. Deadline is June 30.

Contact: Cathie Bryant, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Western Kentucky University, 1906 College Heights Blvd., #11030, Bowling Green, KY 42101-1030, (270) 745-4664, cathie.bryant@wku.edu

http://edtech.wku.edu/deans_office/Gov-LBN_KY-THF.htm

Journalism teacher awards

The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Inc. will select one National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year, four Distinguished Advisers and several Special Recognition Advisers in the annual National High School Journalism Teacher Awards Program. High school journalism teachers must have at least three years of experience. Applications and supporting materials must be postmarked by July 1.

Contact: Richard S. Holden, (609) 520-5927, richard.holden@dowjones.com

https://www.newspaperfund.org/pagetext/prg_homepages.aspx?page_id=prg_teacheroftheyear

Content academies

The Kentucky Writing Project is offering the 2008 Content Area Academies for all Kentucky teachers interested in improving student achievement in mathematics, science, practical living/vocational studies, social studies, language arts or arts and humanities in P-12 classrooms. Registration is \$100. Teachers who complete the five-day academy receive a \$200 stipend, plus professional books and materials to support instruction.

www.kywritingproject.org

Training available for online education portal

Kentucky teachers can receive free online or face-to-face training to use the innovative resources of Thinkfinity.org through a \$50,000 grant announced recently at the National Center for Family Literacy's National Conference on Family Literacy. Thinkfinity.org is the Verizon Foundation's comprehensive online portal to more than 55,000 educational and literacy resources for teachers, parents and students. Resources are aligned with Kentucky's Program of Studies and Core Content for Assessment and include standards-based, grade-specific, K-12 lesson plans and interactive activities.

<http://education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Thinkfinity+Kentucky>
www.thinkfinity.org

BULLETIN BOARD (Continued)**Resources****Agriculture science kit**

Teachers can purchase kits to conduct the experiments, investigations and activities in their classrooms that are offered on the Kentucky Agriculture and Environment in the Classroom's Mobile Science Activity Center. All activities are targeted for 4th and 5th grades and have been aligned to Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment. One kit can be used for classroom demonstrations. The other kit includes enough materials for 30 students to participate in the activities. More information and prices for the kits are online.

Contact: Johnny Parrish, (270) 339-4502, JDParrish1@msn.com

www.kyagr.com/marketing/ageducation/mobileactivitycenter.htm

Standards-based unit manual revised for 2008

The Kentucky Department of Education has revised the "How To Develop a Standards-Based Unit of Study" manual. The 2008 manual contains a revised unit template, information about the components of a unit and a lesson plan, sample lesson plans and a downloadable Word document template.

www.education.ky.gov/JumpTo/?jump=SBUS

Free crime-watch training and materials for students

The Kentucky Crime Prevention Coalition is offering free startup training for youth crime-watch programs in Kentucky. Participating schools also will receive a free startup

kit (normal cost \$100 from Youth Crime Watch of America).

Contact: Kentucky Crime Prevention Coalition office, (888) 798-5272 or (859) 727-2678

www.kyyouthprevention.org

www.ycwa.org

Energy Kids page

This easy-to-navigate resource from the U.S. Department of Energy provides information on forms of energy, classroom activities, science-fair experiments and more. There are six main sections: Energy Facts, Fun and Games, History, Classroom Activities, Glossary and Links.

www.eia.doe.gov/kids/index.html

Hummel Planetarium Web site updated

The Hummel Planetarium at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond has recently updated its Web site to include connections to Kentucky's Core Content. The Web site also has updates regarding sing-alongs, space-science links and driving directions to the planetarium.

www.planetarium.eku.edu/school_programs.php

'Learning, Arts and the Brain' report

"Learning, Arts and the Brain" reports on the research by cognitive neuroscientists from seven leading universities across the U.S. on the effects of music, dance and drama education on other types of learning. The study is available online as a download.

<http://dana.org>

Changed your address? Let us know

If you don't want to miss an issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, please take a few moments to learn how to let us know when your address changes.

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are a certified employee of a Kentucky public school, you can change your mailing information in one of two ways:

- Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at http://ktrs.ky.gov/01_active_members/B_change_name.htm.
- Submit a written request that includes your name, old address, new address, Social Security number and your signature.

Mail the form or your written request to:

Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System

ATTN: Tammy Brown
479 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@education.ky.gov or by mail to:

Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

NAEP writing scores show some progress for 8th graders

The results of the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in writing show that Kentucky 8th-graders continue to make some gains. In 2007, 46 out of 51 jurisdictions (states and Department of Defense schools) participated in the writing assessment nationwide.

Kentucky 8th-graders' 2007 scale score was 151, a gain of five points since 1998 and a gain of two points since 2002. The state's scale score was three points lower than the national average of 154.

The percentage of 8th-grade students in Kentucky who performed at or above the proficient level was 26 percent. This was greater than in 1998 (21 percent) and was not significantly different from 2002 (25 percent). Nationwide in 2007, 31 percent of 8th-graders scored at the proficient level.

In 2007, the percentage of Kentucky 8th-graders who performed at or above the basic level was 87 percent. This was greater than in 1998 (84 percent) and was not significantly different from 2002 results (85 percent). Nationwide in 2007, 87 percent of 8th-graders also

scored at or above basic.

Kentucky's 8th graders scored significantly higher than eight jurisdictions, lower than 21 and about the same as 16.

While girls continue to score higher than boys in 8th-grade writing, the achievement gap between Kentucky white and African-American 8th-graders narrowed in 2002 and again in 2007. In 1998, white students outscored African-American students by 19 points. In 2002, that gap was reduced to 13 points. In 2007, the gap was reduced to 12 points. Kentucky's African-American 8th-graders also outscored the nation's 8th-grade African Americans in 2007.

Kentucky 4th-graders first participated in the NAEP writing assessment in 2002. In 2002, the scale score for 4th-graders was 154, one point higher than the national average. Fourth-graders were not part of the 2007 NAEP writing assessment.

For more than 30 years, NAEP has been the country's only nationally representative and continuing survey of students' educational achievement.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Small actions equal big bucks

Victoria Dedilos, right, uses an old sock as an eraser as she and Natalie Hernandez work on dry-erase boards in Lisa Campbell's class at Painted Stone Elementary (Shelby County). Campbell and teacher Christine Vegh entered the school's environmental activities in the All Small and Mighty Go Green contest. The small actions the student body and teachers take, like recycling paper, plastic bottles and snack boxes, turning off lights and using old socks as erasers, won the school \$5,000 as a national finalist in the competition. As part of the contest, students completed online surveys, wrote about changes they plan to make to go green and studied environmental issues in their science classes.

'Great Teachers Make Great Public Schools'

To celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-10) in Kentucky and to underscore the theme, "Great Teachers Make Great Public Schools," members of the Kentucky PTA asked to submit thank-you messages to some of the teachers who have made public schools great for them, their children and their families.

In addition to these thank-you notes, a link to messages from celebrities, public officials, athletes, elected officials and parents to their "great teachers" is posted on the National Education Association Web site (www.nea.org/teacherday/index.html).

Thank you, Steve Smith.

When I first entered Steve Smith's English class at Calloway County High School this year, I really dreaded it. However, his extraordinary teaching skills have influenced me to pursue teaching English as a career. I want to be just like him - I want to teach English and make it exciting to learn. I want to really connect with my students, like he does.

— Chelsea Snyder, daughter of
Leeann Myers, First District PTA president

Thank you, Tammy Oerther.

My son is in the 6th-grade band and has been under Tammy Oerther's direction for two years. She is a positive role model and friend and is respected by band students at East Middle School (Shelby County). She helped make my son's transition to middle school easier by making band students feel as if they are a small family within the school. Oerther gave my son the confidence and knowledge to become a successful tenor saxophone player. She has truly made a difference in my child's education.

— Jessica Chambers
PTA member, Shelby County

Thank you, Loretta Johnson.

My son's primary teacher, Loretta Johnson, at Lakewood Elementary (Hardin County) made the process of school much easier for us. She always greeted me with a smile and encouraged me to volunteer in her class. During that year, Trace became very ill and had to have several surgeries. She supported us with many acts of kindness and remains in contact with our family today. The bond that grew between a parent, a teacher and a student will last a lifetime.

— Tina Decker, Seventh District PTA president

Thank you, Rose Arnold.

Rose Arnold taught my daughter, Cassie, language arts in middle school and U.S. history at Frankfort (Independent) High School. She brings out the best in her students and makes them reach their full potential. She prepared Cassie for high school and college.

— Veda Aldridge
Frankfort High School PTA member

Thank you, Billy Noble.

Billy Noble, Bates Creek Elementary School (Fayette County) physical education teacher, is an inspiration to everyone he meets. He began a program via the school's TV network of 10-minute morning workouts for students to get their blood pumping and prepare them for the day. Noble teaches students about movement, rhythm, music and cardiovascular activities.

— Tina Moorhead
16th District PTA president

Thank you, Trent Steiner.

The teacher who made the biggest impact on my son was his high school history teacher and assistant basketball coach, Trent Steiner at Simon Kenton High School (Kenton County). (Steiner is now assistant principal at the school.) When my son didn't make the basketball team, this special teacher asked him to be equipment manager and to help at practices and games. Being a part of the team helped increase my son's self-esteem, created a circle of true friends and gave him extra motivation to keep his grades up. That one teacher saw a need and a passion within a child and chose to help.

— Sandy Rutledge, president-elect, Kentucky PTA

Thank you, Sandra Goatley.

Sandra Goatley is an astounding, creative and energetic teacher who makes reading fun. My daughter Lauren now reads on a 4th-grade level. She wants to go to school every day at Bardstown (Independent) Primary to learn new words and see what they will be reading.

— Libby Miles
program vice president, KY PTA

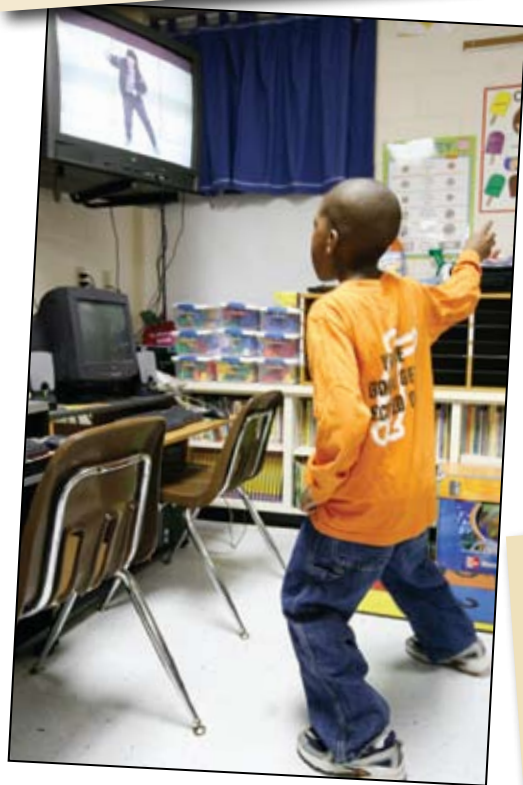
Thank you, Pam Wesley.

My child started primary at Woodstock Elementary (Pulaski County) this year as a struggling reader. Pam Wesley recognized this early and started Logan in several different programs to help him. Logan is now reading at grade level! Her great intuition and patience made this possible.

— Sherry Van Hook, president,
Woodstock Elementary PTA



Teacher Tammy Oerther plays the euphonium with members of the 6th-grade band at East Middle School (Shelby County).



Photos by Amy Wallot

Tyron Briggs exercises with physical education teacher Billy Noble, dressed as Uncle Rico from the movie "Napoleon Dynamite," during the morning video workout at Bates Creek Elementary (Fayette County).